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SUBJECT: DEATH TO THE YANQUI - ORTEGA LAMBASTES U.S. AT
NICARAGUAN ARMY'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

¶1. (U) On September 12, Nicaragua conducted ceremonies to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Nicaraguan Army. Ambassador Callahan, Major General Keith Huber, U.S. Army South, Brigadier General Dominic Cariello, Wisconsin National Guard, USMILGRP, and the Marine Marching Platoon from the 8th and I Marine Barracks, Washington D.C., represented the U.S. at the ceremonies. Cuba, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico and Russia were also represented at the event.

Anti-Imperialism Is Our Philosophy

¶2. (U) In his most belligerent and openly anti-U.S. speech in months, President Daniel Ortega launched into a nearly hour long tirade on the evils of U.S. imperialism and expansionism in Nicaragua and all of Latin America. The history of the Nicaraguan Army, he asserted, is drawn from the "roots of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism, not Marxism-Leninism." He asked, "why should we be blamed for being anti-imperialists? Death to the 'Yanqui' was the call in 1856" (in expelling William Walker). This message has been the philosophy behind Nicaragua's struggle against "the Empire" and remains so.

¶3. (U) The Nicaraguan Army, he asserted, must hold onto its arms and weapons and will resist all efforts to disarm it. "We have not achieved a peaceful world. We still face the expansionist policies of the North American Empire." In the past, under Somoza, and even now the "oligarchs" have wanted to disarm the Army, make it disappear, or make it serve only the rich. The oligarchs seek these changes to the Army, he claimed, at the "imposition of the Empire."

¶4. (U) The "right-wing oligarchy" in the U.S. is now attacking President Obama to derail his policies, according to Ortega. "Those that provoked war in Iraq, Afghanistan and seek a war with Iran are now installing bases in Colombia." These bases threaten Colombia's neighbors, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Brazil, and the U.S. owes an explanation to Latin America for these bases. Moreover, Ortega warned the "North American bases" open the door for Colombia to be occupied by the U.S. and thus threaten Nicaragua directly. Over the past several decades, the U.S. had been closing bases in the region. Now, he lamented, the U.S. has returned to its expansionist and imperialist tendencies and is "multiplying bases" in Colombia, threatening peace in the entire region.

¶5. (U) In a direct insult to the Marine Corps Marching Platoon, baking in over 100 degree temperatures throughout the harangue, Ortega pointed to the Marines and said, "you

young soldiers ... you are not responsible (for these policies). Policy in the U.S. is determined by powerful groups" who only seek to promote war.

Honduras - The U.S. Supported the Coup

¶16. (U) Ortega returned to his ongoing theme that the U.S. was involved in the coup in Honduras. Ortega claimed the Honduran military has always acted at the behest of the U.S., from the 1980's when Honduras "launched aggression against Nicaragua -- at the service of the Empire," up to today and the recent coup. Ortega lamented that at the Summit of the Americas, President Obama pledged a new era of relations in Latin America based upon respect. Unfortunately, this change has not happened. According to Ortega, the reality is that it has been difficult to change policy because of the ongoing control of the military and right-wing forces in the U.S.

¶17. (U) Instead of a changed policy towards Latin America there has been a return to coups and expansionism. He renewed claims that U.S. "intelligence services" were involved in the coup and that the U.S. military facilitated President Zelaya's removal from Honduras through Palmerola (Soto Cano). Ortega said it was "ridiculous" to claim that Palmerola was not a U.S. military base. In his September meeting with Southcom General Douglas Fraser, Ortega claimed he was told that the base is Honduran. In reality, he said, "the base is controlled by the North Americans. It is a U.S. base -- a virtual fortress."

Relations with the U.S. - Give Us More Aid

¶18. (U) Despite these differences, Ortega claimed he wants respectful relations with the U.S. Nicaragua and the U.S. share a struggle against narco-traffickers and terrorism. According to Ortega, no progress can be made in cooperation on terrorism, however, until the U.S. releases the five Cuban "patriots" (i.e. convicted spies) who only sought to protect Cuba from violence being planned by the exile community. Moreover, Ortega asserted that the U.S. needs to give more resources to the Nicaraguan Army and National Police to fight drugs. "They (the U.S.) help very little," he lamented, despite pledges to provide more aid through the Merida Plan. In stopping the flow of drugs north to the U.S., Ortega complained, "we help the North American people but they give us very little."

¶19. (U) Ortega concluded the even with a final insult - giving only a perfunctory salute to the Marine Marching Platoon as they marched past along with cadets and marching teams from other countries represented at the ceremonies. Ortega saluted for extended periods all other units as they marched.

¶10. (SBU) Ortega's insulting behavior contrasted sharply with the Nicaraguan military's treatment of their American guests at a dinner on Friday night. There, CHOD Omar Halleslevens decorated the two American officers and acknowledged the Ambassador by name, the only diplomat he mentioned (three ALBA ambassadors were present, including the Cuban).
CALLAHAN